THE

CENTENNIAL MILESTONE.

1792. FEBRUARY 22, 1892.

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

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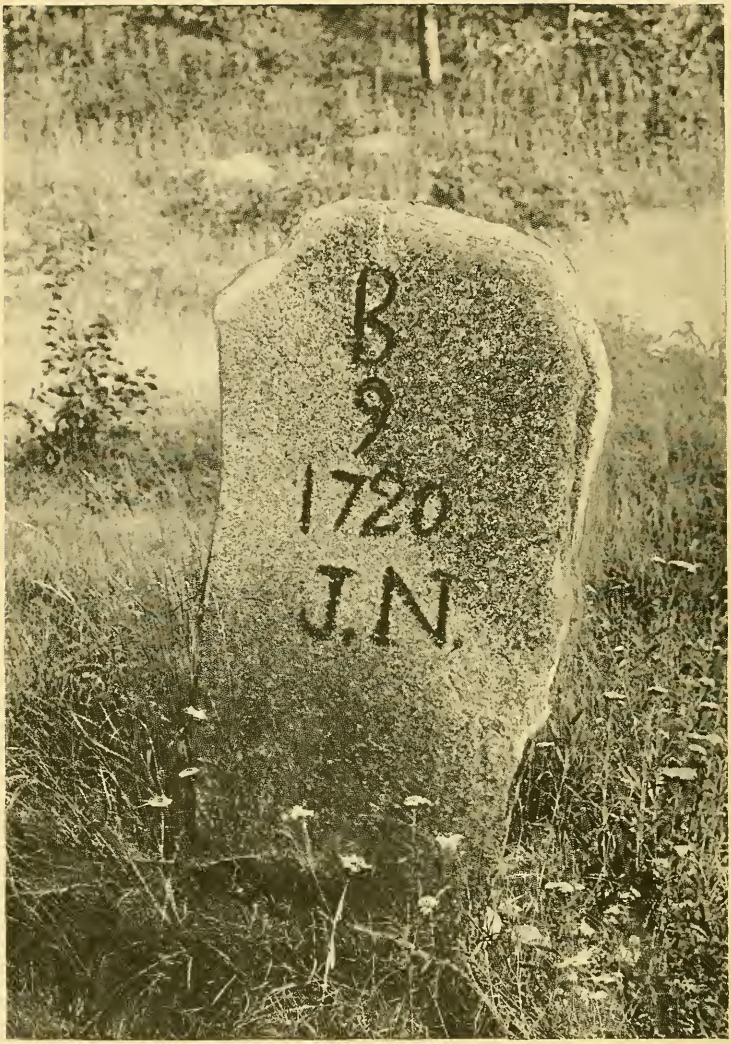

OLD PLYMOUTH ROAD.

NINTH MILESTONE.

THE CENTENNIAL MILESTONE.

AN ADDRESS

IN COMMEMORATION OF

The One Hundredth Anniversary

OF THE

INCORPORATION OF QUINCY, MASS.

DELIVERED JULY 4, 1892.

BY

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

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ADDRESS.

SOME months ago I had occasion to discuss certain details of the celebration we are now engaged in with a greatly valued friend of mine, bearing a name inscribed on many pages of the records of Old Braintree, and who, in his own person, is one of the few remaining specimens of the antique stock, — the town-meeting stand-bys of former Quincy. In the course of our discussion I referred to an address as one mode of commemoration, telling him frankly that in my judgment the day of such addresses was over, — that we had, in fact, of late been deluged with them, especially since what may well enough be described as the epoch of revolutionary centennials came in. The not unnatural result had followed; and, as we all know from our own experience, we now turn with a sense of weariness, if not, indeed, of surfeit, from that page of a daily paper the columns of which are headed with an announcement that yet one more commemoration has been observed in the customary way. These historical orations and addresses had, as I then went on to argue, at one time served their purpose, and it was a useful purpose; for in them is recorded much of historical worth which otherwise might not have been preserved: but this was before the days of town histories and historical societies; and now the oration or address had become the medium by means of which a quantity of rhetoric or sentiment of small present, and, so far as my observation went, of no future, value was forced on the jaded eye and ear of an inattentive public. Forgotten as soon as uttered, even the future antiquarian is not likely to disturb the dust which accumulates upon those

yellowing pages. As I then told my friend, almost every period seems to have some favorite mode of expression: — the last century was in Massachusetts the era of sermons and pulpit discourses, and it industriously stored up a vast literature of that description, the present dreariness of which is inexpressible: ours has been the century of orations and secular addresses, — the Ciceronian period of America; and so, during it, rhetoric and eloquence, much too often of the tinsel, academic sort, have been made to serve the purpose which logic and theological fervor served before. And, finally, I expressed the belief that the student of the twentieth century would hold this form of expression of our time in no greater value than we hold the sermons and occasional discourses of the fathers. But we too will have seen ourselves in print!

As I argued thus with the friend to whom I have referred, he refused to accept my conclusions, replying that in his judgment it was inexpedient on occasions like the present to dispense with the time-honored feature of an address. He not inaptly compared it to the planting of a milestone, which marked for all future time some point which a community had reached in its endless journey. Here we pause for a moment; and, resting from the march, we cast a glance backward over the road by which we have come, as well as forward over that we are yet to traverse. At such a time, he went on, we are, or ought to be, a world unto ourselves: why, then, trouble our minds about other people or about posterity, wondering whether other people are looking at us, or whether posterity will bear us in memory? — it is enough that we have got thus far in our progress, and, throwing off our loads for this day, we pile up the stones which in the future shall serve as a memorial that here we rested as we passed the hundredth milepost of Quincy. Then he referred to other days, reminding me of milestones planted in bygone times by the hands of those who are dead; and as he enumerated these, I had to admit force in what he said. First was the milestone, now more than a century and a half old, which we owe to the Rev. John Hancock, then pastor of the North Precinct Church of Braintree, — a milestone which has come down to us in the form of two sermons

delivered by him to his people, then gathered on Sunday, the 26th of September, 1739 (N. S.), within the walls of the old meeting-house which stood hard by this spot. After the delivery of which discourses the ancient records say that, "being the Lord's day, the First Church of Braintree, both males and females, solemnly renewed the covenant of their fathers immediately before the participation of the Lord's Supper." The century of church life was complete, and a fitting memorial of it provided, — a memorial which, though little noticed by the great outer world, some of us here would be sorry not to have.

Another century passed away, and on the same occasion, on the same date in 1839, though not from the same pulpit, William Parsons Lunt in the stone temple, as it is called, which eleven years before had succeeded on the training-field the ancient meeting-house in which John Hancock delivered his centennial address, — in this stone temple, this very edifice, Dr. Lunt set up another of my friend's milestones, which remains to-day a valued and lasting memorial of the preacher's eloquence and scholarship. Few now remember him, but William Parsons Lunt was in his day a great pulpit orator, — and he was great because he was natural. The second milestone is his monument.

Fifty years more elapsed, and only the other day, in September, 1889, the Rev. Daniel Munro Wilson, now here with us, placed a third stone, marking the end of another half century of ecclesiastical life, — a memorial worthy of the others, and one the value and significance of which will grow with revolving years.

Influenced, I will freely admit, by these arguments and illustrations of my friend, I find myself here to-day, and here for a purpose, — to help plant another milestone. "All things come to him who waits;" and so, amid present indifference, my appeal is to the twentieth century, or even later: — for why may it not be that in the year 2042, when the city of Quincy celebrates its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, — and it is just as certain that the city of Quincy, either by itself or as part of some larger municipality, will be here then as it is that not one

of us will be here, — why may it not well be that, in 2042, when our very gravestones are crumbling, those then dwelling hereabout may rest for a moment as they come to the quarter-millennial milestone, and in doing so may hunt up the record of to-day, just as we hunt up the sermons of John Hancock, dwelling for a moment with curiosity and even interest on that memorial of a remote past, — clasping hands across the centuries. It is not many spoken words that can hope for even a single listener a century and a half after they drop from the speaker's mouth ; yet not a day passes but some one looks with interest on the single ancient milestone of 1720 which still within Quincy limits marks the old Plymouth road. Rude, rough and ill-proportioned, it has cut upon it, besides the distance from Boston and the date, the initials J. N., — standing, I am told, for "Capt. Lieut." Joseph Neal, as he is designated on his gravestone in the burying-ground opposite. One of the twenty-one children of Henry Neal, — for in those days there were families patriarchal, — Joseph Neal, was a selectman of Braintree from 1698 to 1715, and died in 1737, leaving his mark inscribed on that stone by the old Plymouth road, which had already stood there more than half a century when the minute-men tramped by in the April days which followed Concord fight.[1] So it is to-day Joseph Neal's stone. In like manner, on the century ecclesiastical milestone of the town, the name of John Hancock is inscribed; while the bi-centennial bears that of William Parsons Lunt, and the quarter millennial that of Daniel Munro Wilson. And now we plant this centennial civic milestone of to-day.

Still, in turning over the printed memorials of the past, we cannot help thinking of how much greater interest and value they would be to us had those called upon to prepare them been less ambitious and abstruse, — had they only felt moved to talk to us instead of to their congregations, and so to place on record something which, though commonplace and matter-of-fact enough then, would be quaint and curious now. For instance, what a stroke of inspiration would it have been if the Rev. John Hancock, when in 1739 he preached those two discourses to

[1] See Appendix A, p. 41.

his people in the ancient wooden meeting-house of 1732, then almost new, — what a stroke of inspiration would it have been if, in a series of notes or in some preliminary pages, he had described for our benefit it and the people then gathered in it, — the dress they wore and the forms of worship they followed; the houses in which they dwelt, the streets in which they walked, the vocations they pursued; — had he given us, in a word, a pictorial census of the Quincy of 1739! It was all so very familiar to him and to his hearers that the thought doubtless never entered his mind; but now, could this town as it stood here a century and a half ago be for an instant recalled to life, it would seem as strange and unreal to us as any foreign land, — the very language and accent in use, though intelligible enough, would strike oddly on the ear; — only the bay, the islands in it, and the everlasting hills would be the same. As an illustration, take this description of the meeting-house in which John Hancock preached, as it was first seen by one who came to Quincy a young bride nearly a century ago, but still more than fifty years after the father of the great signer of the Declaration had been followed to the graveyard opposite: —

"There were [in Quincy at that time] only two churches, both ancient wooden edifices, — the Episcopal and the Congregational. The pews in the centre of the latter, having been made out of long, open seats by successive votes of the town, were of different sizes, and had no regularity of arrangement, and several were entered by narrow passages, winding between those in their neighborhood. The seats, being provided with hinges, were raised when the congregation stood during the prayer, and, at its conclusion, thrown down with a momentum which, on her first attendance, alarmed Mrs. Quincy, who feared the church was falling. The deacons were ranged under the pulpit, and beside its door the sexton was seated; while, from an aperture aloft in the wall, the bell-ringer looked in from the tower to mark the arrival of the clergyman. The voices of the choir in the front gallery were assisted by a discordant assemblage of stringed and wind instruments. In 1806, when the increased population of the town required a larger edifice, the meeting-house was divided into two parts; the pulpit, and the pews in its vicinity, were moved to a convenient distance, and a new piece was inserted between the fragments."

Not impossibly we might learn something of value for to-day's occasion from this criticism which I have ventured on what has been left us by those gone before. The present, in its every-day surroundings, seems matter-of-fact and uninteresting enough to us; none the less, the time will assuredly come when this commonplace present of ours will be very much otherwise to those who here succeed us. The remote is always strange. I, if no one else, therefore, may be permitted to express a hope that to-day's address will constitute a small part only of our centennial memorial. That memorial, on the contrary, should be designed to do what the Hancock and Lunt memorials fail to do, — it should present us to the future as we are. But this rests with others; it is that portion of commemorative work which deals more especially with externals, physical conditions, — a matter of statistics, plans and portraiture; and however well and thoroughly it may be done, there is still a field, and a not unimportant field, which it cannot cover: and that field is my province.

As municipal bodies go in America, — weighed, that is, in the census scales, and classified according to the number of its houses and inhabitants, the aggregate of its wealth, and the variety and value of its industrial products, — weighed in these census scales, no great degree of prominence can be claimed for Quincy. In point of population she stands twenty-fourth only among the twenty-eight cities of Massachusetts; while in the nation as a whole, judged by the same standard, she is merely one out of ninety-two cities of the fifth class,[1] holding the one hundred and ninety-seventh place in the lengthening roll of American municipalities. Neither is Quincy the seat of any great institution of learning or special industry, — unless, indeed, it may still claim pre-eminence for its granite; but, none the less, Quincy has had its history, nor has that history been devoid of individuality or interest. Unlike many larger communities, the record of Quincy is by no means exhausted in the pages of the census, for through more than two

[1] Under the system of division pursued in the preparation of the Eleventh United States Census, cities having a population of over 15,000 and less than 25,000 are included in the fifth class.

hundred and fifty years those dwelling in the territory now known by that name have had to face their problems, and have done so as best they could. Here in America it may be questioned whether a state of Chinese immobility is ever reached; certainly it has never been reached in Quincy. Sometimes, indeed, the change and consequent re-adjustment involved in the solution of these problems may have been slow, — so slow that those then living and affected by them may not have been conscious that they were going on; but all the same they were going on, and if the story of them when told is not found instructive as well as interesting, the fault, we may rest assured, is not in the subject, but in him who treats it. No particular interest ever, so far as the average man can see, attached to the English Selborne, nor was there anything about the place or its conditions to attract especial notice; but a century and more ago Gilbert White lived and saw and wrote at Selborne, and Selborne has since been classic ground. It is the study and statement of these processes of change and re-adjustment ever going on, now forward and then backward, action and reaction, conditions now out of balance, and then again in equilibrium, — it is the study and statement of this which makes history; and all this can be quite as well studied on the small theatre as on the large. It is only a matter of size, — a question of bigger or smaller; and, as Gilbert White proved, here too the painter, and not the dimensions of the canvas, makes the picture.

Were the story of Quincy told by some historical Gilbert White, it would be transmuted to a hand-mirror, in which could be seen reflected to the life every important phase through which New England and even American development has passed from 1622 to the present time. Unfortunately Gilbert Whites are not forthcoming in response to every civic demand, and of such as are forthcoming few indeed "inherit nor the pride nor ample pinion that the Theban eagle bear;" and so the story invariably has to be told in the conventional way. When thus approached, our local Quincy record divides itself into three distinctive periods, the study of each of which, if entered upon in the true spirit, I, at least, find full of interest;

and each period had its own peculiar problems to deal with. These periods were, first, the germinal; next, the stationary; and last, the progressive, — and they naturally followed each other in the order named. The first, or germinal, period, began in 1625, when Thomas Morton established himself at Mount Wollaston, planting his Maypole there two years later; and it ended in 1642, when this territory was given the name of Braintree and organized as a civil community. The second, or stationary period, beginning in 1640, may be said to have lasted one hundred and ninety years, — coming to an end in 1830, about the time the ancient meeting-house of the Rev. John Hancock made room for the edifice in which we are now gathered. In 1830 began the third period, that of rapid progress and consequent readjustment, — the period in which we have lived, and that of which some of the as yet unsolved problems will to-day engage our attention.

Of these three periods of town history the first, or germinal, is by far the most interesting, for the thread of its earliest story interweaves itself with great events involving the fate of dynasties and empires, — famous names now and again flashing across the local record; while at another time, a little later on, infant Braintree, not yet known as such, was the centre, the very hotbed, of historical episodes which left ineffaceable marks on the annals of Massachusetts. But this germinal period pertains rather to Old Braintree than to Quincy, to the seventeenth century rather than to that the close of which we commemorate. Indeed, for this occasion the Braintree germinal period is almost as prehistoric as that time before the ice age, when, geologists tell us, the bed-rocks underlying our town towered up two hundred feet higher than now, and were fifty miles from the seaboard.[1]

But if the Braintree germinal period is for the purposes of to-day thus remote, it is otherwise with both the subsequent periods, — that which I have called the stationary, and that of rapid progress; both of which, though less dramatic than the first, have an interest of their own.

While, as I have already said, New England communities

[1] See Appendix B, p. 44.

never reach a condition of immobility such as is understood to be characteristic of China, and while all change, be it rapid or slow, involves, soon or late, a process of readjustment of conditions to environment, it is undeniable that the process of change and the consequent readjustment went on slowly and at the moment imperceptibly in the town life of the stationary period of New England history. Referring to that provincial life in one of his great orations, Edmund Burke described it, with that inimitable happiness of phrase possessed by him and by Shakespeare alone among English writers, as the existence of a people "still, as it were, in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone;" and this it exactly was while five generations followed each other slowly across the little stage, the atmosphere of which was at once theological and icy. Change was neither expected nor desired. A simple, laborious, unaggressive race, those composing it were born, lived and died; and concerning them there is little more to record. During that long period the world, both of Europe and America, was more or less convulsed; revolutions took place in England, in Germany and in France, dynasties rose and fell, the house of Brunswick succeeded that of Stuart, and Europe waged war after war, in the course of which Canada passed under English rule, and the American colonies became independent; but, through all the turmoil, the local towns of Massachusetts — Braintree and Quincy among the number — pursued the even tenor of their way. The changes going on without, of which the noise filled the world, were all political changes, and the readjustments they necessitated were likewise merely political; but in the New England towns no new social forces were at work, nor was the existing equilibrium, social, religious, economical or political, seriously disturbed. Thus in 1830 the inhabitants of Quincy cultivated the same fields their fathers had cultivated in 1650, and used in so doing much the same implements; they navigated the same waters with similar vessels. Each generation in the course of an eventless, patient, laborious life accumulated something, leaving to the next generation more fields under cultivation, better dwellings and farm buildings, and

some additional comforts and appliances of life ; but domestic and social usages, and, indeed, all the practical machinery of existence, remained much the same. While the outer world influenced but little the village community, the village community in no way affected the outer world. It has a strange sound now, but it is none the less true that prior to 1830 — only sixty years ago — steam was an unknown factor in the life and industry of Quincy, and what we term machinery was unknown. As it was in 1640, so it remained a hundred and ninety years after ; and within the memory of men hardly yet regarded as old, the horse, the ox, the wind and the stream were the only forces auxiliary to man. In 1826 the granite railway was constructed here in Quincy, and four years later the first railroad was incorporated in Massachusetts; but, incredible as it now seems, more than one hundred and sixty years elapsed after Braintree was incorporated as a town, before even a baggage wagon, adapted also to the carriage of persons, was run over the road between Boston and Quincy, — so trifling was the intercourse and traffic between the two places, though but seven miles apart. Even then, when in 1804 the experiment of such a conveyance was tried, it was found through twenty years to meet every existing need ; and not until 1823 did the stage-coach period begin. But the wine had now begun to ferment, and three years later the railway came : then, slowly at first, but more and more rapidly later on, the era of change set in ; and by degrees the customs and institutions which English and French revolutions, wars of independence and conquests of Canada had affected little if at all, steam and electricity radically altered.

With the change came the necessity of readjustment. The body politic had to adapt its political system to the new environments, and the alterations to be made in the political system, if satisfactory results were to be brought about, had to be just as far-reaching as had been the change in the social, material and industrial conditions; for they all move together. It is with the problems involved in these changes, and the consequent readjustment and adaptation, that we have found ourselves confronted during the closing years

of our first century of independent civic life. During its second century those problems will have to be solved, and it is to them and their solution I now propose to address myself.

But first it is necessary to state what those problems are, or rather what that problem is; for, when all is said and done, the problem is single, and as easy to state as it is difficult to solve. Coming, then, directly to it and using few words, the system — the time-honored system — of local municipal government under which our fathers lived and the country prospered and grew has, in the presence of the changes of the last fifty years, completely broken down and been in large degree abandoned. In Boston, first among the communities of Massachusetts, they abandoned it seventy years ago, just as we here in Quincy, following many precedents more recently established, abandoned it four years ago; we abandoned it as others abandoned it, not because we wanted to abandon it, but because we had to abandon it; and we had to abandon it simply because change necessitated readjustment. Thus our problem is not ours only; on the contrary, it is that common problem of municipal government under republican institutions which for many years has caused, and for more years yet is likely to cause, thoughtful and observant Americans to be perplexed in the extreme.

Under circumstances like these there is no small advantage gained by looking at the situation through the eyes of another, especially if that other chances to be a cool, reflecting outside observer. Those lost and wandering in the woods cannot see for trees, and proximity destroys the sense of proportion. The last and, taken altogether, the most friendly and appreciative of all recent foreign observers of things American, — that one the circulation of whose work has far exceeded any other of the same kind, — speaking of the growth of American cities, refers to it as "among the most significant and least fortunate changes" in the character of our population, and as a matter of "high concern to America, . . . because it is admittedly the weak point of the country;" then, truthfully saying that "no political subject has been so copiously discussed

of late years in America by able and experienced publicists," he adds these comments of his own : —

"There is no denying that the government of cities is the one conspicuous failure of the United States. The deficiencies of the National government tell but little for evil on the welfare of the people. The faults of the State governments are insignificant compared with the extravagance, corruption, and mismanagement which mark the administrations of most of the great cities. For these evils are not confined to one or two cities. The commonest mistake of Europeans who talk about America is to assume that the political vices of New York are found everywhere. The next most common is to suppose that they are found nowhere else. In New York they have revealed themselves on the largest scale. They are 'gross as a mountain, monstrous, palpable.' But there is not a city with a population exceeding two hundred thousand where the poison germs have not sprung into a vigorous life; and in some of the smaller ones, down to seventy thousand, it needs no microscope to note the results of their growth. Even in cities of the third rank similar phenomena may occasionally be discerned, though there, as some one has said, the jet black of New York or San Francisco dies away into a harmless gray. . . .

"For in great cities we find an ignorant multitude, largely composed of recent immigrants, untrained in self-government; we find a great proportion of the voters paying no direct taxes, and therefore feeling no interest in moderate taxation and economical administration; we find able citizens absorbed in their private businesses, cultivated citizens unusually sensitive to the vulgarities of practical politics, and both sets therefore specially unwilling to sacrifice their time and tastes and comfort in the struggle with sordid wire-pullers and noisy demagogues. In great cities the forces that attack and pervert democratic government are exceptionally numerous, the defensive forces that protect it exceptionally ill-placed for resistance. Satan has turned his heaviest batteries on the weakest part of the ramparts.

". . . What Dante said of his own city may be said of the cities of America: they are like the sick man who cannot find rest upon his bed, but seeks to ease his pain by turning from side to side."[1]

[1] Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, chaps. l.—lii.

As we well know, the picture is not overdrawn, and we must reconcile ourselves as best we may to the fact that the disturbance — the incessant tossing of "the sick man who cannot find rest on his bed" — will continue until the readjustment is effected. The difficulty is radical, deep-seated, striking down into the vitals of our political life. One hundred years ago, when Quincy came into independent civic existence as a town of nine hundred inhabitants, there were in all America but twelve cities, and the largest of them had but forty thousand inhabitants; there are now seventy-four cities with more than that number. Quincy alone, a city of the fifth class, — one of hundreds, — has to-day nearly half the population New York had when Quincy became a town. In 1792 there was no city government in Massachusetts. Boston, with twenty thousand inhabitants, was governed by its board of selectmen chosen in town meeting; and it continued to be so governed for yet thirty years more, and until the twenty thousand had become forty thousand. To-day there are twenty-eight cities in the Commonwealth, and nearly two-thirds of its inhabitants live within city limits and under city government. Thus the old town system is disappearing; with us here it has disappeared.

Students of the laws which guide the process of what is known as evolution state as a fundamental principle that "the greater the amount of progress already made, the more rapidly must progress go on;" though the average man is always, in an unreflecting way, inclined to assume that the course of events will stop where it is, and things for the future remain about as they now are. But in this matter the student, and not the average man, is right; and moreover the swift and ever accelerating process now going on from natural causes in the matter of change from town to city government is further artificially stimulated by that protective system which has become such a fixed and leading feature in the economical and fiscal policy of the national government. Thus all things in this country seem to combine to draw population away from a state of rural and agricultural diffusion to one of manufacturing and urban concentration.

Not many of us living here in Quincy realize how complete this change has been in our own case, and how rapidly it has gone on of late, — how little in any respect the Quincy community of 1892 resembles that of 1792. I have already alluded to that Quincy, — the wholly vanished Quincy of the earlier time; but, since I did so, we have been peering forward on the road we are yet to travel, trying to make out its direction and character, whether broad and straight and level, or devious, steep and narrow. I shall presently ask you to take another and longer onward look; but, before doing so, let us, pausing yet at our centennial milestone, look back once more for an instant. There are among us those, nor are they few in number, who have recently joined the column, and so are but imperfectly informed both of the way we have traversed, and of what occurred as we journeyed along it. This looking back, moreover, is not only necessary for the purposes of my address, but it is the historical portion of it; and, as such, an essential of the place and day.

This Quincy of ours you know, and to us it is a very commonplace concern; nor shall I weary you by describing it. You do not need to be told of its inhabitants, nearly twice ten thousand in number, with names English, Irish, Scotch, French, Swedish, and of many other origins, those bearing which worship in many churches, or not at all, while they earn their bread in multifarious ways. It would be little better than waste of time were I to repeat before you the figures of the school census, and tell you how many scholars — with a considerable proportion of whom English is not even the mother tongue — are taught in the numerous districts, or try to estimate the weight of the tonnage which daily grinds over the fast-increasing mileage of our overburdened highways. In one region, the Quincy of to-day is but the retiring-room, the sleeping apartment, of the Boston counting-house; while in another it is a mining camp; and in yet a third a manufacturing community. There is hardly a farm left within the municipal limits; while, except for purposes of pleasure or at our lumber and coal yards, we have no more to do with the ocean or navigation than if the seaboard still were, as it was ten

thousand years ago, fifty miles away.[1] But why go on with the idle enumeration of things familiar? On the contrary, let me go back at once to the Quincy of one hundred years ago; nor, nearly forty years later, in 1830, had it undergone any material change.

The petition for the incorporation of the town, as spread on the first pages of its earliest book of records, was signed by one hundred and fifty persons, the bearers of fifty-nine several names, every one of which was English in its origin; or else those bearing such few as were not originally English names had been so long domiciled in New England that the foreign names had become thoroughly Anglicized.[2] The fifty-nine names were thus indicative of one homogeneous stock; those bearing them spoke the same language, followed the same traditions, had the same social customs, pursued much the same vocations, and worshipped according to one creed and in a common meeting-house. So completely was this last the case that one of the townsmen of that generation, referring to a certain thing as being of most unusual occurrence, declared, in a paper which has come down to us, that it was "as rare an appearance as a Roman Catholic, — that is, as rare as a comet or an earthquake."

As nearly as can be ascertained, the population of the new town numbered nine hundred souls in all, divided into somewhat less than two hundred families, whose accumulated wealth may possibly have amounted in value to a half million of dollars. Their property consisted almost exclusively of land and the buildings thereon, with their contents; for paper securities in our sense of the term were then unknown, except in the form of personal or town notes, or loans secured by bond and mortgage. Taxation was almost nominal; and during the first ten years of Quincy town life the average annual levy for what are now known as municipal purposes, that is, purposes exclusive of the support of the church and pastor, which then devolved on the town, — exclusive of this, the average annual levy between 1792 and 1800 was but $1,000, or about $1.00 per year to each inhabitant. It is now over two hundred

[1] See Appendix C, p. 47. [2] See Appendix D, p. 48.

times as much, while the average amount exacted annually from each inhabitant has risen nearly thirteen fold since 1792, and more than seven fold since 1840: it was $1.00 when the century began, and $1.72 when the century was half over; it is $12.57 now that the century is closed. In 1792 the appropriation for the support of the town schools — or rather the town school, for there was but one — amounted to $250; and in 1829 it amounted to but $1,563, of which $60 was for fuel and $5.00 for incidentals, — these latter being "ink and brooms." The amount expended for the education of each child in the public schools was then $3.00 per annum; it is now $16. It was the same with the highways. There are at this time in Quincy some fifty miles of public streets, much of which is subjected to a traffic in the carriage of granite which no pavement known to the engineer or road-builder is able long to bear; and in 1890 over $40,000 was spent in the maintenance of these streets. In 1792 the old original Plymouth road, — a section of the great "Coast Road" of 1639, — with its few arterial branches, alone existed; and at the town meeting of that year a vote was passed "that a sum of money be raised for the purpose of repairing the Blue Hill road," as the highway from Boston to Bristol county was called; "and it was further voted that three pounds," or $10, "be raised for repairing the same." It was then, the record further tells us, voted that "a new pall be purchased by the selectmen;" for the town in those days made decent provision for the sepulture of the dead as well as for the spiritual welfare of the living. Nearly thirty years later, in 1820, a committee appointed to investigate the subject reported that the room in which the one town school was kept was so crowded that the scholars, two hundred and four in number, "were obliged to wait one for the other for seats, notwithstanding the master gave up his desk and used every other means in his power to accommodate them;" and the committee then went on to submit a plan for certain alterations, at an estimated cost of $200, by which two hundred and fifty scholars were to be brought together in one room and under one master, "with an assistant when necessary." Ten years later, in 1830, the sum

of $600 was deemed an adequate provision for a year's maintenance of the highways.

But instead of going on with these details, I will come at once to what the records show was the golden period of Quincy town government, more especially as so doing affords opportunity for a tribute to one now wellnigh forgotten, but who, during that golden period, was the great administrator of Quincy town affairs. I am one of the not large and fast-decreasing number of Quincy people who still remember Thomas Greenleaf, — for he died nearly forty years ago; and I remember him only as an aged man, with white hair, a deeply wrinkled face and anxious, troubled eyes, driving to and fro through the village street, from his home to the post-office or to church, in a queer old-fashioned vehicle drawn by a horse which seemed as much advanced in years as its master, and hardly less retired from active life. Thomas Greenleaf was then the shadow of his former self; but in his day and generation he was a power in Quincy.

Between 1800 and 1835 the people of the town were well to do, but they had a traditional horror of waste, and scrutinized their tax-bills closely. While the scale of town expenses was so limited that no item escaped notice, and the sum of five dollars spent for an unaccustomed purpose would not improbably lead to a town meeting discussion, anything like corruption in public office was of course impossible; it would have been detected at once. Though the conditions were thus most favorable to good administration of affairs, prior to 1810 the town business had been done in a loose, unsystematic way. The annual appropriations were made by *viva voce* vote; the treasurer received the money which the constable collected; and the selectmen drew it out and paid it over to the minister, the schoolmaster, and those charged with the care of the town's poor. No reports or estimates were made, no papers placed on file; everything was done on a general understanding. A cruder, less organized system would be difficult to imagine; and little could be said in its favor, except that it was natural, and, like most natural things, it worked well under the circumstances. As the town increased, some individual was needed

to organize such a degree of system as the new conditions demanded, — there was a distinct call for a man of administrative capacity; and that man appeared in Mr. Greenleaf, — the typical, natural leader and administrator of a Massachusetts town; one whose field was small, but who was none the less a statesman in his way, and a statesman of a school which the community cannot do without. For in this case the rule is reversed, — it is the less which includes the larger; and, where every minor division of a community habitually produces a body of selectmen certain of whom are capable of organizing and administering the affairs of a town, the community as a whole can be depended upon always through a process of natural selection to evolve statesmen in an emergency. It was so in the Revolution; — the town meeting was the nursery of the Continental Congress, — the selectman developed into the cabinet official.

Of this class was Thomas Greenleaf. Boston born, he was graduated at Harvard in 1790; and coming to Quincy to live in 1803, he remained there until his death in 1854. He speedily began to take an active interest in town affairs, and his subsequent life showed how useful in a local way a man of character, fair parts, and good business capacity can always be. He belonged to the colonial gentry; and, a man of property, he was, it almost goes without the saying, a strong Federalist. In 1808, and for thirteen consecutive years thereafter, he was chosen to represent the town in the General Court, and during those years he became the leading man in Quincy; and so continued until after 1835. As such he organized the town's business, and he did it admirably. The change began about 1812, when the cost of the town poor had grown to be a scandal. Mr. Greenleaf took the matter in hand, and caused an almshouse to be built. He was chairman of the building committee. The sum of $2,000 was appropriated for the purpose, —for the scale then was small, — and when the building was completed, Mr. Greenleaf reported, with a pride which he did not attempt to conceal, that though no allowance had been made for omissions in the estimates, and much extra work had been done, — amounting to twenty per cent, — yet, notwith-

standing this, the new almshouse was finished, and every bill paid, with $84.48 of the appropriation unexpended. Under his close business management the cost of maintaining the poor was then reduced by more than one half; and his reports on the subject, spread in full on the records, are as interesting to-day in presence of that still unsolved problem of pauperism as they were when written, more than seventy years ago.

Having reduced the care of the poor to a system, Mr. Greenleaf turned his attention to other matters. Insensibly, but steadily, the method of conducting public business in all its branches was brought into strict order. In March the annual town-meeting was held, and over it Mr. Greenleaf presided as moderator; the full list of town officers was chosen, and the various articles in the warrant referred to special committees. The meeting then adjourned. In April another meeting was held, and the committees on the almshouse, the schools, the town lands, and the town finances presented their reports, which were in writing, and entered into every detail. Another adjournment was then had, and in May the appropriations were voted. Everything was thus made public and of record; and everything was open to criticism and debate. As a system of local government, under the conditions then existing, it did not admit of improvement.

It is needless to say that under the Greenleaf *régime* Quincy prospered greatly. A debt of some $2,000 was incurred on account of the War of 1812 and for building the almshouse in 1814, but it was speedily paid off out of the surplus which a better management saved from the regular annual appropriations for the care of the poor. In 1816 the town-hall and schoolhouse was burned down, — for town-hall and schoolhouse still were one. The amount appropriated for a new building to serve both purposes was $2,400. Mr. Greenleaf again was chairman of the building committee; and once more he in due time, with overflowing pride, reported the work done, all the bills paid, whether included in the original estimate or found to be necessary as building went on, with an unexpended balance of $362.61 remaining in the hands of the treasurer. Though in doing this a new town debt had been incurred, good

financial management soon paid it off without increase of taxation. What was this but the administration of a state in miniature? — and, when all is said and done, how considerable, do you suppose, in the measurement of the infinite, is the difference between the successful management of the affairs of a town and those of an empire?

The digression may seem long, but not only does it cut on our milestone a name which rightfully belongs on it, but in no other way could I give so clear an idea of what Massachusetts town-government was at its best period and in its purest form. Under proper conditions no better government was ever devised by human ingenuity; — I should almost be willing to go further, and say no other form of government was ever devised equally good. But town government also has its limitations; and Quincy, like Boston before, in due time found them out.

The Greenleaf *régime* ended nearly sixty years ago, and during those sixty years the differentiation of modern life has taken place. It is one thing to manage the affairs of a small village community through the machinery of town-meetings; it is quite another to manage those of a place numbering a population of a score of thousands. In 1830 the annual appropriation of Quincy for necessary town expenses was $4,500. It has been seen how this sum was voted by a small body of men, all knowing each other well, having a community of interest, and acting under a usage which had the force of law. Forty-five years later, in 1876, the annual appropriation was $116,000, and the articles in the warrant had swollen from half a dozen in number to nearly forty. The character of the town-meeting also had changed. In place of the few score farmers or tillers of the soil, following the accustomed lead of a man like Thomas Greenleaf in this century, or John Quincy in the last, and asserting themselves only when they thought their traditions or equality were ignored, — in place of this small, easily-managed body, there met in the Quincy town-meeting of the later period a heterogeneous mass of men numbering hundreds, jealous, unacquainted, and often in part bent on carrying out some secret arrangement in which private interest over-rode all sense of public welfare.

In other words, — and in this respect our experience in Quincy has been merely a repetition of the experience of those dwelling in many other places, — government through town-meeting must always remain a primitive form of government, and one adapted only to the needs of a comparatively simple community, homogeneous, and neither too numerous nor with wealth very unequally distributed. Its chief excellence lies in the fact that it is the most perfect government of the people by the people which has ever been devised; and its simplicity is its most striking characteristic. Though admitting of very considerable development, and far more elastic and adaptable to circumstances under skilful business handling than would naturally have been supposed, town-meeting government does not, any more than other forms of government, admit of infinite development, nor is its elasticity without limit. The original requirements of Quincy, like other Massachusetts villages, were few and comparatively simple; but during the last sixty years the few requirements have multiplied, the simple has become complex, the homogeneous has become heterogeneous. Church has indeed been separated from state; but in place of the one function of which the town was thus relieved, the modern municipality has found itself compelled to assume endless other functions. The schools have been multiplied; and so have the branches of instruction pursued in them, — until even the more rudimentary forms of education have become the province of specialists. The highways, in the case of Quincy, are crushed under a traffic which reduces the firmest known pavement to powder. The care of the sick, the poor and the insane has been magnified into a science and reduced to a system. These, the ancient and traditional functions of the town, have all, through the natural process of development, passed, in the larger centres of population, beyond the handling capacity of the ordinary official, and of necessity devolved upon a class of men specially trained to deal with them. Meanwhile, other and new needs have made themselves felt. The public peace has to be provided for; scientific provision must be made against fire; streets need to be lighted, questions of public health are to

be considered, the introduction of water necessitates drainage, the old burying-ground develops into the modern cemetery, the public school differentiates and is supplemented by the public library, and the training-field and ancient common, having passed away, are replaced by the park and the public garden. The performance of the duties necessarily pertaining to all these things, calling as they do for almost infinite special knowledge and a complicated financial machinery, was imposed little by little on the old town governments. It was as if an old-fashioned country cart, well designed, honestly made of excellent material, altogether good in its day and for what was then needed of it, was by degrees called upon to do the work of a modern railroad train. As a matter of course the cart must break down. So government through town-meeting broke down in Quincy in 1888, just as nearly seventy years before it broke down in Boston.

Thus the problem presented itself to us, and its solution is not a matter of choice or of pleasure, but of stern necessity: nor do I think it would be stating the case in language of undue strength to say that this problem of municipal government is the present skeleton in the closet of the American political household. Nevertheless, in the situation, however uncomfortable or disturbing it may be, there is one feature of great encouragement. Our problem may be difficult, and its solution yet remote; and few Americans who have thought at all upon the subject will deny that it is difficult, or that no great degree of progress towards a solution has yet been made: but at least in our case the way to a solution is open and obvious, — no throttle-valve chokes it. For in this respect the body politic bears a close resemblance to material things in the domain of physics; and men of science say that if an amount of water enough to fill a tea-pot only, were confined in a small space, with no outlet of escape, and were there subjected to a sufficient degree of heat, the weight of the universe would not suffice to hold it in. It would find or make a vent; and the commotion caused by it in so doing would be in exact proportion to the resistance it was forced to overcome. On this point, history is full of object-lessons, even though

mankind is slow to see and understand them. The wars of the religious Reformation were such an object-lesson. The most absolute and far-reaching system of domination which the ingenuity of man, working on custom, superstition and fear, has yet devised, sought in the sixteenth century to hold freedom of thought in strict restraint. The new force had long lain inert, or expanded but slowly; then by degrees its presence began to be felt. Thereupon the repressive power in turn exerted itself, with no thought of a vent, until at last, through the lives of four wretched generations, it was as if an earthquake were shaking the everlasting hills, and toppling down every structure raised by man. It was the same in the French Revolution of the last century; it is the same in Russia to-day. In other words, agitation, restlessness, disorder and the demand for change are in the body politic merely outward indications of some process of internal readjustment at the time going on, as a result of which the existing order of things accommodates itself to new conditions; and the readjustment is sudden or gradual, easy or violent, according to the nature of the new force at work, and the repressive influence against which it has to assert itself. Nature has a way of working peculiar to itself: it is not apt to be in a hurry, but it is sure; and in its processes it pays no attention to the convenience of either individuals or communities. Consequently those internal commotions, which in fact are but the indications of a healthy and developing community, always have made miserable, and ever will make miserable, the lives of the well-to-do, the comfortable and the conservative. They are doing so now with us here, as well as with others elsewhere.

In our case, too, the new forces at work are unquestionably active and far-reaching, — not impossibly they may be subversive; but at least they find a ready vent, and hence it follows that, though there may be — and, indeed, unquestionably has been — a temporary deterioration, no necessity exists for violent action, since there is no desire for and no attempt at forcible repression. Herein much is gained. Each thought, each need, each craving or new impulse, intellectual

or material, is left to develop in its own way, with the conviction on the part of all that trial and discussion are the only tests from which there is no appeal. The twentieth century has thus much advanced over the fifteenth; and America today occupies a better position than Russia or England, as they stand there holding their nihilistic and Irish wolves by the ears. Whether we personally want it or not, new light has got to come: but there are various kinds of light; and it makes all the difference in the world whether the new light breaks as a quiet and gradual dawn, no matter how obscured and stormy in aspect, or whether it comes from the lurid glare of a rumbling volcano.

It was not until the century now ended was drawing near its close that we here in Quincy fully realized that the change through which others had passed was immediately impending over us. For some years, as we watched the rapid growth of the town and the development of its functions of government, an uneasy feeling had, it is true, crept abroad that things could not forever go on in what we felt to be the good old way. We were vaguely conscious, in spite of ourselves, of the presence of that skeleton in the closet. But never had government through town-meeting worked better or brought about more satisfactory results, material and financial, than since 1870; and we, not unwisely, I think, deferred the impending issue until, in 1888, it was forced upon us by the unmistakable progress of events. Then the problem, of which we had heard so much elsewhere, confronted us; and, girding ourselves for our work, we undertook to try our hand at a solution. We are, of course, not yet far enough advanced in the path of practical results to speak with any confidence of the outcome of our effort, but the effort was at least an honest, an intelligent and a creditable one; as such, moreover, it has attracted a certain degree of interest from without. Of that effort, its significance, its merits and its shortcomings, I now propose to say something. Having looked back over the road by which we reached the spot where we are, and on which our centennial milestone will stand, it is time once more to peer forward over the beginning of the next stage in our journey.

An experience, now no longer short and still fast increasing, seems to indicate that one cause of the trouble experienced in our city governments is that they have from the beginning been organized on a defective model, — that they followed an analogy which was not applicable, — the model of the constitutions of the State and of the United States. The municipal government was assumed to be analogous to the political government. In fact it was and is nothing of the sort: the state is a political entity; the municipality, a mere business organization. Accordingly, it is no part of the proper function of those handling municipal affairs to consider philosophical principles of state-craft. They are, on the contrary, persons selected by the constituencies to do the work intrusted to them, because the constituent masses have grown so large that they can no longer meet in one body to do that work themselves. The function of the municipal officer is, therefore, to administer the affairs of a local community in an intelligent and business-like way. Nevertheless, in Massachusetts the municipal governments have always been traditionally framed with the cumbrous machinery of the larger political bodies. They have, as matter of course, had their boards of aldermen, representing the senate, and their common councils, representing the more popular branch of the Legislature, instead of the simple executive and board of directors of innumerable other business organizations. Indeed, it seems almost to have been assumed as a maxim by the framers of the city charters that municipal machinery would work more efficiently in proportion to its clumsiness and intricacy. Again, the functions of the several departments of the ordinary city government have, in the course of time, become hopelessly confused. Responsibility has ceased to exist; for the legislative has by degrees encroached on the executive until, in the greater number of cities, the mayor is reduced to a mere cipher, while certain irresponsible combinations in the legislative chambers and city halls, generally known as "rings," really control the administration of affairs. Almost of necessity, the executive functions have more and more fallen into the hands of commissions and boards, as the special requirements for the suc-

cessful management of streets, sewers, lighting, police, etc., grow in importance. These boards, if not irresponsible, are as a rule and under existing city organizations not responsible to the chief executive.

Public attention had for years been forcibly called to these gathering difficulties by the occurrence of scandals of ever-increasing notoriety, more and more discussed, which those who drew up our Quincy charter bore freshly in mind. Accordingly, that charter, framed in consultation with individuals both within and without the State who had made a special study of the subject, was based on correct political theories in one respect at least, — in so far as was practicable, it was not a creation, but an outgrowth. In this matter, the principle at the base of all successful constitutional government was carefully regarded, — the fundamental principle that "everything which has power to win the obedience and respect of men must have its roots deep in the past, and that the more slowly every institution has grown, so much the more enduring it is likely to prove." Changing, therefore, in the least degree possible, the system to which the community had long been accustomed, those who framed our Quincy charter proposed simply to do away with the old board of selectmen as an executive body, and with the town-meeting as a legislative body, and to substitute for them respectively a reponsible single executive, and a council much in the nature of a board of corporation directors. The framers of the charter in distributing the powers and functions of the proposed government followed, and followed correctly, the maxim that "Deliberation is the work of many, Execution is the work of one;" and while to the council of Quincy under its charter all proper deliberative and directive liberty was allotted, the Mayor of Quincy was avowedly intended to be clothed with a larger and more arbitrary power within his department than had ever in the United States been confided to the executive head of any organization classed as political.[1]

Such was and is the Quincy charter, — our attempt at a solution of the great problem now vexing the nation. It was a new

[1] See Appendix E, p. 49.

departure, — a departure carefully prepared, in full sympathy with the current political theories of the day; and then understandingly entered upon. Whether it will prove a successful departure, — a veritable and valuable contribution to political science, — remains to be seen; but whether in the result it does or does not so prove, it was and is, as I have said, none the less an honest, an intelligent and a well-considered attempt at the solution of the problem.

And now, having said this much, let us look at the thing from another point of view; for we may rest assured that, before any final result is reached, — at least if that result is to be of a satisfactory and not of a chaotic character, — this thing has got to be studied as well as looked at from every conceivable point of view. From another point of view may it not be that in the Quincy charter the fatal mistake was made of endeavoring to devise a governmental machinery which should do the work the citizen only can do with success? Of late the effort has unquestionably been, through some ingenious and careful readjustment of the parts of government and their relations to the community and each other, to invent a mere machine, which, once set in motion, will work of itself,— a kind of nickel-in-the-slot political arrangement, under which the citizen will be saved the trouble of doing anything, except periodically dropping an improved ballot into a patented ballot-box.

More than a century and a half ago an English poet, a good deal more read formerly than now, epigrammatically exclaimed —

> "For forms of government let fools contest:
> That which is best administered is best."

While this certainly is not now, and never was, wholly true, yet there is truth in it, — a degree of truth of which the charter theorists need to be reminded now that they are so plainly tending to the opposite theory, that, in municipal governments at any rate, everything is in the form, the proper distribution of functions and concentration of responsibility — that, in short, if we are only patient and ingenious enough in device, a charter can in time be produced which, once set in motion, will

grind out a correct and satisfactory administration of municipal affairs. May it not be that, after all, the Quincy charter was to some extent an attempt of this sort, — an attempt to secure through mechanical means that which a disinterested and widely diffused public spirit and co-operative action only ever have brought about yet, or probably ever will bring about hereafter?

If this is so, it needs no prophet's eye to foresee that our Quincy charter is, as the solution of a difficult problem, not destined to prove a success. When Mr. Bryce, in the extracts from his work already quoted, said that, as respects American municipal affairs, "we find able citizens absorbed in their private business, cultivated citizens unusually sensitive to the vulgarities of practical politics, and both sets therefore specially unwilling to sacrifice their time and tastes and comforts in the struggle" of civic administration, — when Mr. Bryce wrote this, he touched with the point of his pen the true seat of trouble. More than that, he indicated the only possible remedy for it.

It is good to frame charters and constitutions; it is well to devise ingenious political expedients; it is refreshing to observe the working of nicely balanced paper adjustments: — but, by themselves and of themselves, it is most improbable that in the present or any other respect these will ever work out the political salvation of a community which depends upon them. The Quincy charter, I will also add, however excellent it may be in theory, will in the coming years not work out the municipal salvation of Quincy. Of that much at least we can even now feel assured. Something else is necessary; and that something is men, — and, moreover, the very best men this or any other town or city now can or ever will supply. The solution, and the only solution, of the problem which torments us may be as easy to point out as it is difficult to secure. In looking for it, also, it may not be necessary to go very far afield.

I venture to suggest, also, that in the matter of municipal rule and administration we might to-day derive useful hints from the experience in another field of France and Italy, and yet more of Germany. Those nations have their skeletons in the closet, —

their problems which must be solved, — as we have ours. Adequate security against internal disorder or foreign aggression is their problem. Their solution of it is compulsory military service. Our problem is good municipal government. Might not its solution be found in a species of compulsory municipal service? The suggestion of such a thing may at first seem futile and almost foolish; yet, perhaps, the more it is considered, the less idle will it appear. In republican America, no less than despotic Russia, the community has, so far as the individual citizen is concerned, — no matter who that citizen may be, or what his vocation, or what his estate, — the community has over him a certain right of eminent domain; and a right which within reasonable limits it should exercise. To say this is merely to assert, what no one will deny, that every citizen is towards the government which protects him under obligations of duty a quittance for which is not included in the receipt of the tax-collector. If then the public exigency demands, and the demand can in no other way be met, just as the German government puts its hand on every German, — high-born or low-born, rich or poor, — and puts him for a term of years into the ranks of its army, exacting from him this forced service on public account, — so, under our institutions and in the spirit of them, you here in Quincy, and by the same principle those there in Boston and in New York and in San Francisco, have a right to lay hands on any citizen of your or their municipality, be he rich or poor, prominent or obscure, educated or ignorant, and exact of him a term of municipal service, if you see fit so to do; and moreover, just as in Germany a physical disability or papers of discharge alone give exemption from military duty, so here, if a proper system prevailed, only a similar disability or a reasonable term of duty performed, ought to secure exemption from municipal service. Not only under a republican system of government is this, I repeat, the right of the community, but more than that, it is its duty to exercise the right, and to enforce its exercise by all necessary means.

The enunciation of such a doctrine of public right and private duty will, I know, sound strange now, and by most be regarded as theoretic. I greatly fear, also, that as a practical

remedy it is out of the question, being opposed to that tendency or drift of public opinion and unwritten law of usage than which nothing is more difficult to reverse or overcome. If such is the case, — if municipal service cannot be put on the same plane as jury duty, — it remains only to accept the situation, and to go on treating that service in the future as we have treated it in the more recent past, as a voluntary contribution to be made by those of more public spirit, and withheld by those of less. But if such is indeed the case, let no one hug himself in the pleasing delusion that the results of American municipal government in the future will be any more satisfactory than they have been heretofore. Most assuredly they will not, for it will then be evident that the root of the trouble is in the decay of public spirit; and neither charters nor systems of checks and balances, no matter how intricate or how cunningly devised, ever were or ever will be an adequate substitute for public spirit. On the contrary, those devices become then a delusion and a snare.

Such a theory of public right and private duty may to some also sound Utopian rather than merely theoretic. To such, if such there be, I will merely say: It was not always so! — and in proof thereof, I with all confidence appeal to the record. Listen, and you will learn, very possibly to your surprise, that what you now dismiss as Utopian, — that very compulsory municipal service, irrespective of every social distinction, which I have suggested, not only formerly prevailed here in Quincy, but was enforced by a money penalty as well as by public opinion. And first, I call as a witness one who, it will be remembered, before being President of the United States, served two successive years as a selectman of Braintree. John Adams graduated at Harvard College in 1755, and six years later, in 1761, was a young lawyer just beginning practice in his native town. Here is his experience, recounted by himself, of compulsory municipal service as then practised:

"In March [of that year], when I had no suspicion, I heard my name pronounced [at town-meeting] in a nomination of surveyors of highways. I was very wroth, because I knew no better, but said nothing. My friend Dr. Savil came to me and told me that he had

nominated me to prevent me from being nominated as a constable. 'For,' said the doctor, 'they make it a rule to compel every man to serve either as constable or surveyor, or to pay a fine.' I said they might as well have chosen any boy in school, for I knew nothing of the business; but since they had chosen me at a venture, I would accept it in the same manner, and find out my duty as I could."

Now for other cases of the enforcement of this rule of compulsory municipal service. Your ancient records are full of them, nor were any exemptions allowed. For instance, in 1734 Josiah Quincy, then a young man of twenty-five, was elected constable, and the town constable in those days collected the town taxes, — a duty even more odious then than now, for to it a financial liability for the entire levy attached by law: to this office of constable the Josiah Quincy of that day was chosen in the Braintree town-meeting of 1734; and the record goes on, "Mr. Josiah Quincy refused to serve, and paid his fine down, being five pounds." So John Borland, belonging to one of the few wealthy families in the town, a member of the Church of England society, and subsequently a Tory, was chosen constable in 1756, though then excused from serving; but in 1757 he was chosen again, and appears to have served. In 1774 General Joseph Palmer, being then fifty-eight, a man of fortune and a deacon, was duly chosen constable at the annual March meeting, over which he was at the time presiding as moderator; but he "refused serving, as incompatible with his church office." In 1728, Moses Belcher was chosen; and he declaring non-acceptance, William Fields was next chosen; Fields also declaring his non-acceptance, "John Adams, being by a majority of votes chosen, he declared his acceptance." In 1735 no less than twenty-five pounds were paid in as fines for non-acceptance; and those fines were looked upon as so considerable a source of revenue that in 1730 it had been voted that the money accruing on this account should be for the benefit, not of the town as a whole, but of the particular precincts in which the individuals who paid it might live. Col. John Quincy's only son, Norton, graduated in 1756, and two years later, at the town-meeting of September 11, he was chosen constable. Another meeting

was held a week afterwards. Colonel Quincy was then a man of nearly seventy, and for almost fifty years he had been the most prominent personage in the town. He was looked up to with that respect which, in the popular mind, always accompanies advancing years associated with high personal character and the long holding of public office. The old man seems to have thought the choice of his son as town constable an act derogatory to himself; so he went into the second meeting, and, as the record says, "desired his son might be excused from serving constable." Among those to whom this request was addressed there could not have been many who remembered a time when the man who made it had not, as a matter of course, presided at town-meetings. They were not wanting in deference to years and standing; and if they would defer to any one, they would surely defer to him after whom the North Precinct as an independent town was subsequently named. But, clearly, they thought that Colonel Quincy was now demanding for himself and his an exemption from public service which amounted to little less than a denial of equality. Such an assumption of superiority was inconsistent with the spirit of town government. And so, the record proceeds, "after reasons offered," the request to be excused was "passed in the negative," and the town treasurer was directed "to call on said Norton Quincy for his fine." Apparently the old man felt this slight, as he regarded it, deeply; for his name does not appear again in the town records, though it was nine years yet before he died. But young Norton Quincy accepted the rebuke in the true spirit. He paid his fine, and the next year, when the town again chose him constable, he quietly accepted the office and performed its duties. Later he was chosen selectman, serving as such for many years during the revolutionary period.

So stands the record on the point that in Quincy here there is nothing novel in the idea of compulsory municipal service, or in its practical enforcement. In former days a man could not be called upon to serve forever as town-constable, nor could he properly be called upon to serve perpetually now as a mayor or as member of your city council; but he was then

compelled to serve his reasonable term of municipal duty in the positions to which his fellow-townsmen called him, and now he should be compelled to do the same. Nor wealth nor indolence nor private occupation sufficed to secure exemption then; nor should they suffice to secure it now.

I have also said that the American municipality is entitled to the service of its best men. But who are your "best men"? — for, in politics, this phrase sometimes excites a sneer, as though in that field the talking of "best men" seemed to contain an implied and undemocratic assertion that for civic purposes all men are not equal. By "best men," therefore, are meant those who in the ordinary walks of life — on the street, in the court-room, the sick-chamber and the market-place — are recognized as most successful in their callings. If you are going to organize a bank or a manufacturing or a railroad company, you do not select from among its stockholders a list of directors largely composed of those who have notoriously failed in whatever else they have undertaken, or who are otherwise discredited. You carefully select, on the contrary, men known to have been shrewdest and most successful in the management of their own affairs, and who stand highest in the estimate of the stockholders. Has the same practice been followed as a rule in the make-up of the boards of aldermen and common councils of our cities? Yet in what way, so far as good business management is concerned, does a public corporation differ from a private corporation?[1] By the "best men" of a municipality, therefore, is meant those who are recognized and looked to as best and most successful in the ordinary walks of life: and it is to a reasonable share of the services of these that, I insist, every municipality is entitled as of right; and, moreover, that its claim should be enforced, where public opinion does not suffice, by such other means, whether of obloquy or pecuniary loss, as might be found necessary to bring about the desired result.

Herein, I submit, might be found one factor, and a most important factor, in the solution of our problem. But the suggestion of it will be met with the objection that, through the

[1] See Appendix F, p. 58.

working of the political machinery now in use, and to which as a community we are thoroughly accustomed, the best men are not selected for office. The machine, indeed, is not worked to that end. Far from it; the professionals who make a business of manipulating the caucus are to the modern citizen, honestly minded but engrossed in his private affairs, very much what armed mercenaries were to the town mob in old feudal days, — nine times out of ten they are absolute masters of the situation. They nominate whom they please; and, in municipal office, they have no use whatever for the community's "best men."

There is force, too, and a great deal of force, in this practical view of the subject. It is true — and for us very sadly true — that the whole underlying political machinery now in common use in American cities (and in Quincy, it may fairly be presumed, like the rest) is admirably adapted — as admirably adapted as if it were so designed — to put control securely in the hands of the professionals. The caucus system supplements the ward system. To be in public life in America, — whether in the National Congress or the city government, — a man must be a member of the political majority in the locality in which he chances to live. A political system better adapted to throwing control into the hands of those who will use it for ulterior and selfish ends, and for keeping the "best men" out of the field of public usefulness, could not be devised: and so it is against this part of the existing political machinery, I submit, that the charter-makers and reformers should now be directing their efforts, rather than in the direction of more ingenious contrivances for the division of functions and the concentration of responsibility. The difficulty is in the basis of representation. We reach our results to-day by the process of counting noses, *pro* and *con*, within the pales of certain geographical ring-fences known as district and ward lines!

The puzzle, therefore, the charter-reformer has to work out, if he is going to get down to the root of the matter, is some practical system which shall secure the utmost political free play to the individual citizen, and the representation of minorities in municipal affairs; having done this, — having thus set

individuals free and made minorities potent, — it will be for those composing the minorities to put their hands, as of old, on the shoulders of the "best men," and exact of them compulsory municipal service, those civic tours of public duty.

On this problem the past throws no light. You may search with a conveyancer's care the pages of the Braintree records, or your own record-books of Quincy, but you will find nothing in them to aid you. The environments are all new; the adjustment to those environments must be equally new: but you will be uncomfortable all the same, — you will toss about like Dante's "sick man who cannot find rest upon his bed," — until that adjustment is effected, and correctly effected. It may, unquestionably it does, seem strange that in a matter of such moment the precedents to guide us should be so few, — that no finger-posts exist along the road we must travel. Indeed, were it not plainly so, it would be thought incredible that, after nearly three centuries of active experience, the English-speaking race should in such a matter as local municipal government cling to a system which leaves it to arbitrary geographical lines to supply the basis of representation, instead of seeking it in a common purpose existing among bodies of citizens. It is not easy to conceive of anything more illogical and crude, or, it may be added, more oppressive. But the absence of precedent in no way affects the situation. The situation is bad: nor will the trouble be settled until it is settled right. We are now represented by men because they live in the next street to us, not because they and we, thinking alike on municipal matters, want to act together. It would surely require no great degree of ingenuity to devise a local municipal system under which it would be practicable for a scattered constituency — no longer imprisoned within ward lines so that those composing it may the more conveniently be throttled by ward politicians — so to concentrate itself as to escape complete suppression. It would not be profitable for me to discuss this matter further, for nothing which could be uttered here and now will perceptibly affect results. These things work themselves out by a law of their own; and being impatient or scolding at the slow course of events is of no

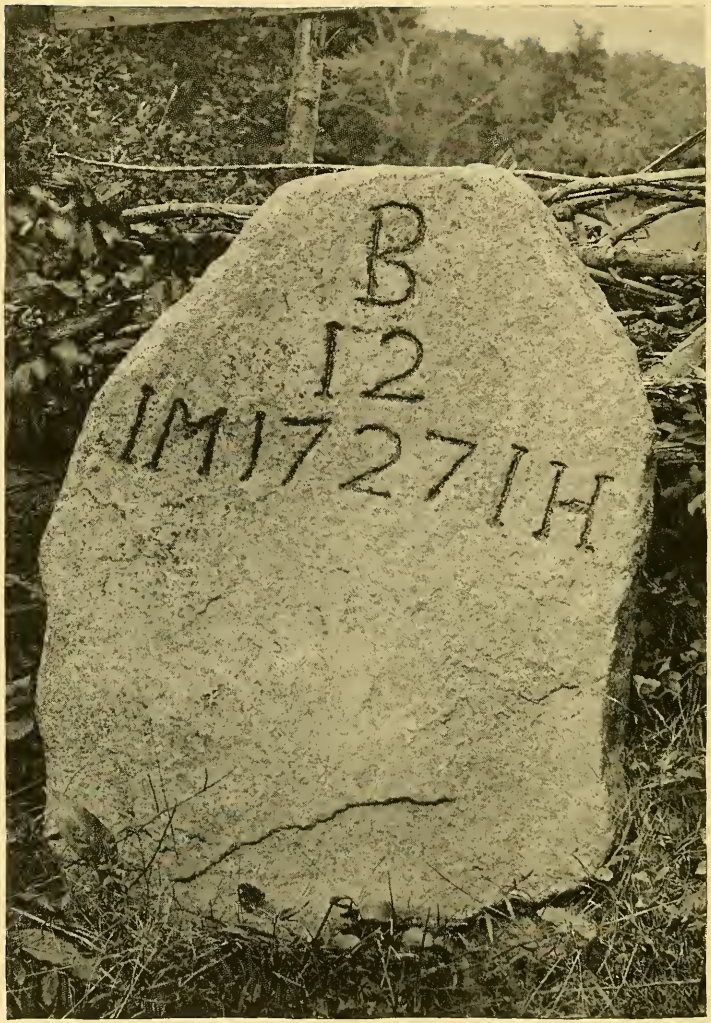
earthly use. If there is anything good or practicable in what has here been suggested, it will come under the pressure of necessity, and all in good time. Assured of this, we can afford to withdraw our gaze from the lengthening, onward road before us, with confident faith that just as the eighteenth century saw with us a system of compulsory municipal service in accepted and active operation, so the twentieth century will devise for us — if such a thing is really worth devising — some practical method of minority municipal representation which shall restore that system in a shape adapted to existing conditions, by utilizing to the utmost those saving forces of individuality in the citizen which are now ignorantly wasted, where not systematically suppressed.

Not much remains to be said. Such as it is, the milestone is planted, and in a few hours more those composing our Quincy column of to-day — men and women, young and old, coming together from hall and street and park — will take up their burdens and again resume the line of march. The banners may be rolled up and the mottoes put away; for an hundred years must pass before those who are to succeed us will stop again to rest for a time and look back over a like vista. It is not profitable to attempt to divine the course of future events, for the unexpected is apt to occur: but, as our Quincy column winds its slow length along the dusty road or through the pastures new, it may at least be given us to hope that the Providence which watched over the fathers will not hide its countenance from the children.

"Lead, Kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead Thou us on;
The night is dark, and we are far from home,
Lead Thou us on.

. . . . . .

"So long Thy power hath blessed us, sure it still
Will lead us on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone."



OLD PLYMOUTH ROAD.

Twelfth Milestone.

APPENDIX.

A.

THE lack of appreciation of the ever-growing historical interest which attaches to monuments and local nomenclature has already led to the destruction of much which lends individuality to Quincy, as to other ancient towns. It is not easy to say whether the utilitarian stone-mason and surveyor of highways, or the progressive land-speculator, has, in this respect, the heavier load of responsibility to carry. Good reasons can be urged against the preservation of ancient buildings, except in very exceptional cases. In course of time they become unfit for modern use, and, indeed, on sanitary grounds, for human habitation; while altogether too frequently they stand in the way of changes and needed improvements: but these arguments do not apply to old-time memorials and monuments, or to traditional nomenclature. These are apt to be interesting; and they are never in the way.

Take for instance the provincial milestones on the road from Boston to Plymouth. Chief-Justice Paul Dudley, early in the last century, placed a line of these through Roxbury to the Dorchester line, marking them with his initials, "P. D." Another line, marking "The lower way" from Stoughton's Mill, or Milton Lower Falls, to Boston, was planted by Governor Belcher about 1734 (*History of Milton*, pp. 112–113). The seventh and eighth stones, bearing respectively the dates 1722 and 1723, but without initials, are still standing on the west and south roadside in Milton. The ninth, the first of the series in Quincy, is referred to in the text, and is reproduced in the frontispiece to this Address. At least one attempt has been made to remove and "utilize" this stone for some such purpose as repairing a wall or covering a drain; but the emphatic objection of members of the Newcomb family, whose house stood opposite to it,

prevented, in this case, an act of stupid and ignorant desecration. The tenth stone — an historical landmark in Old Braintree and Quincy — stood in its proper place by the roadside in the centre of the town, until one day, some twenty years ago, a stone-mason, building one of those fortifications known as ornamental stone walls in front of the house of the late Lemuel Brackett, seized upon it, tore it up and cut it to pieces, and inserted a portion of it in the wretched wall he was constructing. The portion thus preserved bears the initial letter, "B," and the distance figures (10) from Boston; the rest of the stone is gone. The eleventh milestone stood close to the so-called Adams houses at the foot of Penn's Hill. Less fortunate than the tenth, this milestone wholly disappeared years ago, and no trace of it remains. It was probably taken possession of by the masons engaged in building the Samuel Curtis house in 1830 (Quincy *Patriot*, Oct. 26, 1889); and they, with no idea whatever of the act of desecration they were committing, not improbably used it in common with the stones of the old boundary wall, near the street end of which it is said to have stood, as foundation material. Indeed, the tradition is that all this stone was "utilized" for the underpinning of the barn built close behind the house, and still standing. If such is the case, it is within the bounds of possibility that the old eleventh milestone may yet be recovered, and restored to the place where it stood for more than a century. The twelfth milestone still stands on the rising ground beyond the southern slope of Penn's Hill, on the easterly side of the road. It bears, besides the indications of distance and date (1727), two sets of initials, I. M. and I. H. I have not ascertained of whom they are commemorative. Some years ago a highly utilitarian surveyor of highways seized on this stone as a handy cover for a drain or culvert he was engaged in constructing. Fortunately this act of vandalism came to the knowledge of Samuel A. Bates, the veteran town clerk and antiquarian of Braintree, who bestirred himself in time, and was lucky enough to induce the selectmen to interfere and preserve the memorial.

It has been the same with the names of streets and localities. The section of the ancient historical coast road of Massachusetts Bay, provided for by action of the General Court in 1639, the route of which through Old Braintree was fixed finally in 1648, — this most interesting of all New England roads, connecting, as it did, Boston with Plymouth when both were the capitals of separate colonies, — this Coast Road, instead of being known as such, or,

at least, if it must be modernized, as "The Plymouth Road," or even as "Plymouth Street," — this ancient thoroughfare has, in Quincy, been divided up under the meaningless names of Adams, Hancock, School and Franklin streets! The eager desire people, especially the residents in suburban towns and cities, have for living in a "Street" or on an "Avenue" is marked, and productive, traditionally, of disastrous results. Though Park Lane in London is one of the most fashionable quarters of the metropolis of the British Empire, it is currently supposed that the dweller in the outskirts of what is known as a "live American town" cannot sleep quietly in bed if he, or more usually she, lives in a house in a "Road" or a "Lane." Accordingly, in Quincy, not only has the Old Plymouth Road been dismembered and brought to life again in the way just described, but, among other and similar cases, "Col. Quincy's Gate" has been re-baptized as Bridge Street, and "The President's Lane," so called because John Adams opened it to reach his cow-pasture on Stony-Field Hill, has been converted — Heaven only knows why — into Goffe, or Goffee, Street. Finally, the noble tree-lined private avenue laid out from the Neponset turnpike to his dwelling by the third Josiah Quincy, nearly a century ago, instead of being known for all time as "President Quincy's Avenue," has lately turned up as commonplace Elm Avenue.

But the worst act of vandalism of this sort is the most recent. In the northern portion of Quincy, near Squantum, there was a region known from time immemorial as the "Farms District." It was a broad plain some distance south of the Neponset, and lying between the bay front and the swamps through which the line of the Old Colony railroad was run. In all Massachusetts there was no site of greater historical interest than this, for from it the Commonwealth may, in some sense, be said to have derived its name. Writing in 1633, William Woods said of it: "This place is called *Massachusetts Fields*, where the greatest Sagamore in the country lived, before the plague, who caused it to be cleared for himself." Accordingly it was to this point that Miles Standish and his fellow explorers from Plymouth directed their course when, on the 29th of September, 1621, they made their first visit to the country of the Massachusetts (*Memorial History of Boston*, vol. i. p. 64). It was the central gathering place — at once the play-field and the muster-ground — of that "goodly, strong and well-proportioned people" whom the redoubtable Captain John Smith described as being "very kind, but in their fury no less valiant."

In the winter of 1891–92 this historical spot — the spot which was to the Massachusetts what the Isthmian Fields were to the Greeks — passed into the hands of a suburban land company. As one means of bringing it into notice, the promoters of the enterprise advertised for a name, offering a sum of money as a prize for that which should be selected as most euphonious and appropriate. From this ordeal the Massachusetts Fields emerged as "Norfolk Downs"! It might, with far greater propriety and significance, have been designated Billings' Upland.

But Norfolk Downs is merely the last historical misnomer. The next to the last was nearly, though not quite, as bad. In 1870 Taylor's Hill in North Quincy passed into the hands of a land company, and, as usual, went in search of a name. It shortly reappeared as Wollaston Heights; by which designation it since has been, and hereafter doubtless will be, known. Dimblebee Heights would have been quite as appropriate (Braintree *Records*, p. 30).

On the other hand, Taylor's Hill might well have been given a name of the greatest possible historical significance. As the investigations of Mr. Edwin W. Marsh, — that "valued friend" of mine "of the antique stock," to whom I have referred in the opening of this Address, — as Mr. Marsh's investigations have shown, Taylor's Hill and the whole surrounding region covered by the Wollaston Heights settlement, was a portion of the tract, including six hundred acres, allotted in 1636 by the town of Boston to William Hutchinson, the husband of that Mistress Anne Hutchinson whose name is burned deep into the early history of Massachusetts. It was to her husband's house on this grant that Anne Hutchinson came on her way to Rhode Island when banished from the colony of Massachusetts Bay in April, 1638. Wollaston Heights is therefore another meaningless misnomer; the locality should have been called Hutchinson Heights. The name would then have signified much.

B.

THERE is no branch of modern science the conclusions reached in which have undergone greater or more constant revisions than have those reached in geology. As matter of future, and at some remote day possibly of curious, reference, it may be worth while to state briefly the theory at this time most currently accepted of the latest

geological reconstruction of the territory now included in the limits of Quincy.

Prior to the last glacial period the New England coast line is supposed to have run some fifty or sixty miles farther east and south than it now does, along what is known as the Continental Shelf. The territory which now constitutes Quincy was, therefore, at that time an inland locality, some two hundred feet higher above the sea-level than it now is. The Merrimac River, instead of turning towards the north at Lowell, as at present, flowed in a south-easterly direction, finding its way to the ocean through the depression which is now Boston Harbor. As respects the ocean, the site of Quincy, therefore, was somewhat as Springfield now is, — perhaps an equal distance from the sea-board and on a river of not much less magnitude than the Connecticut. Like the neighboring region, the Blue Hills and Mount Ararat stood some two hundred feet higher than they now do, while the other Quincy hills (with the exception probably of Penn's Hill), Taylor's Hill, Forbes' Hill, President's Hill and Great Hill,— the drumlins, as they are called by geologists, — did not exist. They are all of glacial formation.

During the last glacial period there was probably from three to five thousand feet of solid ice over the highest summit of the Blue Hills. After the ice layers had attained a certain thickness a perceptible subsidence of the earth's surface followed. This process of subsidence went slowly and steadily on under the increasing pressure until the bulk of the ice disappeared. The subsidence then amounted to some two hundred feet, and the present shore-line of Quincy was accordingly submerged. After the disappearance of the bulk of the ice the crust of the earth rose again with, geologically speaking, considerable rapidity, some twenty feet above the present coast-line ; then, reacting, it reached what has since that time been the established level. The Quincy territory became sea-board, and the local geological outlines have not since undergone material change.

During the glacial period, and especially after the ice began to melt and retreat, several sub-glacial rivers evidently discharged their waters through ice-tunnels tending in a southeasterly direction across the northerly portion of Quincy. The line of the Blue Hills not impossibly served as a barrier of retardation in the retreat of the glaciers. One of these sub-glacial streams evidently discharged itself on the summit of what is now known as Forbes' Hill, as the ponds on the summit of that hill, and the deep erosive de-

pressions on each side of it clearly show. This and other streams flowing farther north, reached the sea through what is now known as Black's Creek, forming, as the ice disappeared, the kames and kettle-holes clearly to be distinguished in the Merry Mount Park and the low grounds north of Wollaston Heights.

Through the forward flow of ice, during the glacial period, the soil overlying the granite and slate bed-rocks of Quincy was much eroded and borne away towards the southeast. In place of the soil thus removed a new glacial deposit was made on the lines now existing, of which the Quincy drumlins, already referred to, are the distinguishing feature. One of the present theories of geologists, and a theory as plausible as any yet suggested, is that these drumlins were accumulations in the bed of the ice movement of much the same character as those now seen wherever a body of water runs over a comparatively level bottom. In such cases, any obstacle which causes the current to move more slowly in one portion of the channel than in another, will lead to an accumulation of soil or material at the point of slackening. In this way, wherever, after the original surface-soil was removed by the ice-flow, there existed on the surface of the country a ledge or other unusual obstacle, such as an accumulation of boulders more easily surmounted than removed, the movement of the ice would be retarded and a mound of glacial deposit accumulated greater or less in proportion to circumstances. At the same time other portions of the surface, where less resistance was met, would be eroded to a corresponding degree. The existence of the drumlins, and the corresponding depressions and water-courses, are in this way accounted for on a theory at least plausible; though numerous other theories hardly less plausible are also advanced, and can be found in the text-books (Wright, *Ice Age of North America*, chap. xi.).

The remoteness of these changes in point of time is up to the present a subject of much question among geologists. Some maintain that the glacial period was at least fifty thousand years ago; while others argue that it was not more than eight or ten thousand. In the case of Quincy the superficial indications strongly favor the shorter period. The marks of glacial action in the shape of kames, ponds and drumlins are so fresh that it is difficult to believe a period of even eight thousand years can have elapsed since the action which created these features of Quincy. The drumlins, for instance, are covered as a rule with a deposit of vegetable loam not over ten inches in depth. As is well understood by geologists,

the accumulation of loam goes on under some law the conditions of which do not yet admit of statement, and no inference as to age can safely be drawn from the presence or absence of that deposit; but assuming that only eight thousand years have elapsed since the end of the glacial period, it would follow that the vegetable accumulation on the Quincy hills has not exceeded an inch and a half in a thousand years. As these drumlins were, until within the last two hundred years, covered with trees and undergrowth in the same way that the Blue Hills and other uncultivated upland portions of Quincy now are, it is not easy to see how the accumulations of vegetable deposit could have been so slow. Admitting the argument that this accumulation was prevented by the natural process of erosion, and especially by the heavy rains which must have marked the earlier period after the disappearance of the ice, it would follow that the drumlins ought to be cut deep by ravines, the channels of water-courses, and that a large accumulation of soil would be found in the adjacent valleys. Such is not the case. The drumlins bear no indications of extensive erosion, or, indeed, of any erosion, except of a gradual and equal character; neither is there any undue accumulation of soil in the valleys. On the other hand, such accumulation as has taken place, in swamps and elsewhere, is indicative of the passage of a brief geological period only. In fact, were not the indications at other points clear that the ice period occurred at least eight thousand years ago, the surface evidence in Quincy would lead lay or superficial observers to infer that hardly an eighth part of that time could have elapsed.

C.

Among the reasons for the incorporation of Quincy as an independent town, assigned in the petition of January, 1791, was the following:—

"Your petitioners impressed with Common sentiments of their Country have a warm desire of seeing their Children educated in such a manner as is best adapted to render them the most useful members of Society and as they inhabit a long extent of Sea coast, their Character and habits of life will naturally take a maritime cast and an education adapted to fit them for trade navigation fishery and their attendant arts and manufactures would be very desirable, and as your petitioners humbly conceive would be greatly advanced under such an incorporation where those that

advance their money for Schools might apply it to the best advantage and our youth be thereby rendered more extensively useful to their families and beneficial to the publick."

Following the sea during the eighteenth century would next to agriculture seem to have been the favorite calling of the young men of Braintree North Precinct. During the Revolution Mrs. Adams wrote: "The rage for privateering is as great here as anywhere. Vast numbers are employed in that way;" and in June, 1780, when the privateer *Essex*, from Salem, was captured in the English Channel, twelve Braintree young men were in her crew. Most of them were from the North Precinct, and in proportion to population the loss was equivalent to that, possibly, of one hundred and fifty young men in 1890.

The French Reign of Terror began with the decapitation of Louis XVI. in January, 1793, in consequence of which war was declared against France by Great Britain in the following February. At a special town-meeting, held in Quincy six months later, on August 12th, it was —

"*Voted.* that Benja. Beale Esq, Hon. Richard Cranch esq and Moses Black esqr be a Committee to make a reply to a circular letter sent by the Merchants and traders of the town of Boston to the Select Men of this town.

"*Voted.* that the above Committee be a standing Committee to see that there be not any privateers fitted out from this place by any of the Citizens of the United States or others against any of the Beligerent powers, in order that a strict neutrality may be kept between us and them."

D.

THE petition for the incorporation of Quincy was presented to the General Court in January, 1791. As stated in the text, it was signed by one hundred and fifty persons, bearing fifty-nine different names. Of these one hundred and fifty persons, one hundred and twenty-nine were residents in the North Precinct of Braintree, five in those portions of Dorchester, south of the Neponset, known as "the Farms" and Squantum, nine in the adjacent easterly portion of Milton, and seven in that portion of the Middle Precinct of Braintree known as "Knight's Neck." In the following list of the separate family names found appended to the petition of 1791, Pierce,

Rowe and Rawson belonged to Milton, and the territory in which they lived was not made part of Quincy. Randall was of Knight's Neck, which was not annexed to Quincy until 1856, at which date no one named Randall lived there. Those names in the list printed in Roman are still borne by residents of Quincy, either descendants of, or from the same stock as, those who signed the petition; those printed in Italics are either extinct in Quincy, or, if found there, are borne by persons not of the same family as those bearing the name who signed the petition. Making allowance for the three Milton names of Pierce, Rowe and Rawson, but including the Braintree name of Randall as resident in a locality subsequently annexed to Quincy, it will be seen that twenty-eight out of fifty-six family names, or one half of the whole number, have within the century become extinct in Quincy, in persons of the same stock. Many of them would doubtless be found in other localities: —

Adams.	Burrill.	Hayden.	Pray.
Alleyne.	*Chandler.*	*Hobart.*	Quincy.
Apthrop.	*Cheseman.*	*Hollis.*	*Randall.*
Arnold.	*Clark.*	*Horton.*	*Rawson.*
Beale.	Cleverly.	*Howard.*	*Rowe.*
Badcock.	*Copeland.*	Hunt.	*Sanders.*
Bass.	*Cranch.*	Marsh.	Savil.
Baxter.	Crane.	Mead.	Spear.
Belcher.	*Crosby.*	*Mears.*	*Stetson.*
Bicknell.	*Curtis.*	*Miller.*	Tirrell.
Billings.	Field.	Newcomb.	Turner.
Black.	*Gay.*	Nightingale.	Veasey.
Blanchard.	Glover.	*Phipps.*	*Webb.*
Brackett.	Hall.	*Pierce.*	*White.*
Brown.	Hardwick.	Pratt.	

E.

THE Quincy city charter may not improbably hereafter prove an interesting document in the history of the gradual development of the American municipality of the future, — that result to which the country is now slowly groping its way. A somewhat detailed statement of the course of events and line of discussion which led up to

it will, therefore, not be out of place, and may hereafter become useful for reference.

The change from town to city government began to be actively agitated in Quincy towards the close of the year 1884, and at a meeting of citizens of the Wollaston Heights district then held, a committee was appointed to consider and report on the whole subject. Subsequently at an adjourned meeting on the 3d of January, 1885, Mr. Josiah Quincy, on behalf of the committee, presented an elaborate report, which was printed in full in the Quincy *Patriot* of the following Saturday (January 10th). As the charter subsequently framed was in the main the work of Mr. Quincy, the following passage from this report is of interest as indicating the fundamental principles on which the instrument was based: —

"The trouble with the usual form of city government is that it seems to be framed for the purpose of hopelessly mixing up executive and legislative functions, and securing general irresponsibility and inefficiency; city offices are filled partly by election by the people, partly by election by the legislative body, partly by appointment by the mayor without confirmation, and partly by the mayor with confirmation by the legislative body; departments are headed by unpaid commissions of men having no special knowledge of the work which they have under their charge; a new mayor finds the offices filled with men over whom he has no control, and who hold their places independent of his will. The result of such a system is that very few men of proper executive ability are willing to take the office of mayor, for they know that they will be held responsible if things go wrong, without being given sufficient power to make them go right; if the right man occasionally happens to be elected, the result is public disappointment at seeing how little he is able to accomplish, and the discouragement of future efforts at reform. Public indignation vents itself against the legislative body as a whole, without often being able to fix any responsibility upon any member or members of it. The legislative body usurps most of the executive functions, and the result is inefficiency and extravagance, if not actual corruption. A class of small common-council politicians is created who make their living by some hook or crook out of managing the affairs of the city. Such a condition of things, especially in the large cities, is only too familiar to all. Your committee believes, however, that these evils can be avoided, as they have been already in some cities, by the adoption of a simple, business-like form of government. The principal point should be to give the mayor full executive powers, holding him to a strict responsibility to the people for the manner in which he exercises them, and to confine the legislative body strictly to its function, which has been well described as that of 'critics with the power of the purse.' Such an apparently simple and reasonable proposition involves, however, radical changes in the scheme of municipal government adopted by all of the cities of this State."

A mass meeting of citizens of the town, at which some six or seven hundred were present, was held in the Town Hall on the 8th of January, and the subject of a change of government discussed, the usual arguments for and against it being set forth by a number of speakers; and at an adjourned meeting, held on the 15th of the same month, a committee of thirty was appointed to take the whole subject into consideration. It was not until Monday, November 30th, that another public meeting was held. Meanwhile the committee had prepared majority and minority reports, the former in favor of and the latter adverse to a change of government, and both reports had been printed in the issue of the Quincy *Patriot* for November 14th, 1885, where they can be found.

At the meeting of November 30th a strong opposition to the proposed change developed itself under the lead of Mr. H. H. Faxon and Dr. William Everett; but at an adjourned meeting held a week later it was voted to appoint a committee of fifteen to frame a charter and submit it for consideration at a future meeting. Of this committee Mr. Theophilus King was chairman; but the details of the work committed to it were put in the hands of a sub-committee consisting of Messrs. Josiah Quincy and Sigourney Butler.

For over a year the matter remained under the careful advisement of these two gentlemen, both of whom were graduates of Harvard College, Mr. Quincy having been graduated in the class of 1880, and Mr. Butler in that of 1877; both also were lawyers, and felt a keen interest in the subject they had under investigation. Accordingly they not only made a careful study of municipal government in America, but put themselves in communication with every one within convenient reach, — including, among many others, Mr. Gamaliel Bradford of Boston, and Mayor Seth Low of Brooklyn, N. Y., — who had made a special study of the subject, or had practical experience in it.

The report of the committee, and a form of charter accompanying it, was submitted through the columns of the *Patriot* of January 29, 1887. The following passage from this report is of interest as matter of record, especially that portion of it which relates to the subject of minority representation. This possible feature in municipal government, referred to in the text as vital, was, it will be seen, fully considered in framing the charter, but omitted from it on the sole ground that the time for successfully introducing so novel a feature into a city charter had not yet come. It was dangerous to attempt everything at once: —

"The charter has been drawn on the general lines recommended in the report of a former sub-committee of your body. The complete separation of the legislative and executive departments of city government, which was urged in that report as of the first importance, has been fully carried out in the present draft. As this involves something of a departure from the common form of city government, your committee venture to recapitulate some of the arguments formerly submitted. The extravagance, inefficiency, and corruption which unhappily are so often seen in city governments can hardly be claimed to exist because they are approved by a majority of the voters; they exist, on the contrary, because the majority are unable, through defects in the scheme of government, to secure an honest and efficient administration of their affairs, and because a confused and vicious municipal organization paralyzes all effort to secure good government. The fundamental trouble in most city governments is their failure to make a proper distinction between the legislative and executive functions, and to keep them separate from each other. The necessity of such separation is conceded in theory as one of the cardinal principles of our republican government, but in practice it has been almost universally ignored so far as cities are concerned. All of the corporate powers are lodged in the mayor and the city council; but in distributing these powers between them the charter commonly gives to the council not only all of the legislative, but an important part of the executive powers as well, and leaves it free to usurp still further executive powers, according to the common tendency of legislative bodies. In defiance of the maxim, 'Deliberation is the work of many, Execution is the work of one,' the soundness of which is supported by all the past experience of the world, the attempt has been made to conduct municipal governments upon the theory that execution as well as deliberation may properly be made the work of many. The natural result is inefficiency and extravagance, if not corruption. It is as contrary to sound principles to give a city council the power to choose executive officers, or to reject the mayor's appointment of such officers, or to administer a department of the city government through a committee of its members, as it would be to give a mayor the sole power to pass a municipal ordinance or to make an appropriation. The circumstances under which our government was founded naturally gave to those who shaped its first institutions an excessive dread of a strong executive, and led them to extend the legislative power at its expense. But the bitter and costly experience of municipal misgovernment ought by this time to have taught the lesson that there are greater dangers, at any rate so far as the government of cities is concerned, than any that can attend the granting of full executive powers to the mayor. To give such powers does not remove the government further from the people; on the contrary, it brings it nearer to them, and renders it much more subject to their control. Under a popular government experience has proved that one man can nearly always be held strictly responsible for the exercise of powers intrusted to him, but that a body of men is often irresponsible. A mayor is not likely to deliberately pursue a wrong course of action in defiance of public opinion; but when a council is once allowed to meddle with the

executive department and to have control of the expenditure of money or the making of appointments, defiance of public opinion on its part becomes a frequent occurrence, and when election day comes there is generally a complete failure to hold its members to any responsibility. Public opinion is nearly always irresistible when justly aroused and concentrated upon one man; but it is too apt to lose all of its force when it has to expend itself upon a body of men supporting one another in wrong-doing.

"The mayor is just as much the servant of the people as is the humblest member of a common council, and from the nature of his position is far more subject to their control. The simpler the form of government is made, the more likely the people are to understand and control it. The responsibility of a mayor for executive work over which he is given full control is something that can be made clear to the dullest voter; the responsibility of a councilman who has supported a job cannot often be so easily fixed and understood. Under a proper charter a city should be governed with some approach to the standard of efficiency attained by a large private corporation in the management of its business; but such efficiency can only be reached by a system of government which secures the adoption of business principles. Spasmodic efforts to secure a business-like administration of city affairs through a citizen's movement at election time must be of temporary benefit at best if the system of city government is allowed to rest upon an utterly unbusiness-like basis. The separation in politics of local affairs from those of the state or nation is very rarely possible, but the municipal government can be placed upon such a basis that whether administered by the candidate of a citizens' convention, or of one of the regular political parties, it will be likely to be conducted upon business principles.

"In view of the above considerations your committee in its draft of a charter has given the mayor absolute power of appointing and removing all of the municipal officers therein established, excepting only the members of the council, the members of the school committee, which constitutes a co-ordinate and independent branch of the executive department, and chooses its own superintendent of schools, and the auditor of accounts and comptroller, if any, the latter officers being chosen by the council to act as a check upon the executive department. All of these municipal officers are given the same absolute power to appoint and remove the subordinates in their respective departments.

"To compensate for the large powers given to the mayor, your committee has imposed upon him large responsibilities to the council and to the public. The mayor and his administrative officers are required to be present at all regular meetings of the council, and to give such information as may be asked for as to the business of their respective offices; they are given the right to speak upon all matters relating to their offices, but without the right to vote. They are also required to place upon public record the reasons for every removal from office made by them. The mayor may further be removed at any time by vote of two-thirds of all the members of the council; this provision will certainly be likely to act as a check upon any mayor who is inclined to abuse his powers, and as a sufficient safe-

guard and means of remedy in case such abuse ever actually takes place. The term of office of the mayor has been left at one year, the customary term in the cities of this Commonwealth, although it has been lengthened in some large cities elsewhere to two years or more ; if a mayor is given proper powers there seems to be no great objection to requiring him to present himself to the people for re-election as often as once a year.

"The only officers besides the mayor who are to be elected by the people according to the charter drafted are the members of the council and the members of the school committee ; your committee believes that all other officers properly constitute a part of the mayor's administration, and therefore should be appointed by him. Members of the school committee are left to be elected, as at present, two members each year to serve for a period of three years.

"Your committee has given much consideration to the subject of the city council. In accordance with the recommendation of the former report above referred to, a single branch only has been established, instead of two branches. The reasons urged in favor of two branches do not seem to be of much weight in the case of cities, while they tend to confusion and division of responsibility. The single legislative body, which it is proposed to call the council rather than the board of aldermen, is not an entirely new departure, as it was adopted in the recent charter in the city of Waltham in this State, and has also been in force in Brooklyn, where several years of experience have been in its favor, as well as in other large cities. In regard to the number of the council, there has been some difference of opinion in your committee, and a minority favors a larger number of members than twenty-three, — the number settled upon.

"As to the manner of electing members of the council, your committee has followed the recommendation of the former report, and submits a plan for the election of eleven of the twenty-three members on a ticket at large, and of the remaining twelve by districts.

"Much consideration has also been given by your committee to the question of adopting some form of minority representation, with the object of securing in the council a proportional representation of the opinions held by the voters; by the present method of election a bare majority of the voters can elect all of the members of what should be a representative body, giving no representation at all to the minority party. The plan of cumulative voting, which is now in force in some elections in this country as well as in England, was fully considered, and rejected as not entirely satisfactory. While all the members of your committee admit the justice and desirability of minority representation, three of them do not consider it expedient to incorporate in the draft of the charter any plan for securing it, and it is therefore reported without one ; while three other members, believing that the system known as the single transferable vote is a scientific and satisfactory one, involving only difficulties in counting the ballots, which may well be undergone for the sake of the advantages to be gained, are in favor of incorporating in the charter a provision for such a system. In case the adoption of any more elaborate system of minority representation is not favored, it is suggested that the adoption of what is known as

the limited vote, — *e. g.*, allowing no one to vote for more than seven out of the eleven councilmen at large, — would secure, with great simplicity, a fairly just representation of the minority party."

The eleventh section of the charter as proposed, being the second section of the title relating to the legislative department, read as follows : —

"Section 11. Each qualified voter shall be entitled in all elections of councilmen at large to cast as many votes as there are councilmen at large to be elected, and in all elections of councilmen from wards to cast as many votes as there are councilmen to be elected from his ward. The persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected councilmen at large and councilmen from wards respectively."

A series of public meetings were subsequently held, at which the provisions of the proposed charter were debated at length. At two of these, held on May 7th and 14th, the subject of minority representation was discussed in connection with the proposed section 11, and a strong and earnest effort was made by the more enlightened portion of those who took part in the discussion to have the principle of minority representation incorporated in the instrument. The chairman of the meeting, Mr. J. H. Slade, took the floor, making an earnest speech in advocacy of it; it was also advocated by Mr. Quincy. The principal arguments against it were those usually advanced against whatever is novel, in any way complicated, or but partially understood. The opposition manifested was sufficiently strong to show that the committee which prepared the charter was correct in its conclusion that the time had not yet come for a system of minority representation, in Quincy at least, and the issue was not pressed.

As a result of these discussions the charter was referred back for amendment to the committee which reported it, and was subsequently again reported in a new draft, through the columns of the *Patriot* in its issue of November 26, 1887. The alterations made in the original draft were not of a very material character; but, so far as they went, especially in the direction of an increased ward representation in the council and a decrease in the number of those composing the council chosen at large, the changes distinctly failed to improve the original draft. They tended in the direction of the conventional city charter and in favor of the professional and ward politician. The human, less wise than the animal, sheep insisted as usual on being in the custody of the wolves.

A town-meeting was then called for Thursday, December 1st, 1888, at which, after an animated discussion, the form of charter recommended was approved, and a committee appointed to secure its passage by the Legislature. It became a law on the 17th of May following; was accepted by the town by a vote of 812 in favor, to 454 against it, at a special town-meeting held on the 11th of June; and it went into operation on the 5th of January, 1889.

The Quincy charter has now been in operation for three years and a half. It may be said generally that as the result of its working the impression prevails that the composition of the council — the legislative department — is the weak point in it. In that body there has been a noticeable tendency towards the sacrifice of general to local interests. Ward politics and requirements have been unduly prominent. This it is claimed is due to the feature of local constituency in the charter, and to the want of any provision securing minority representation. The students of municipal government assert that the Quincy charter, as far as it went, was based on correct principles; but that it failed to carry out those principles to their necessary logical result. The analogy of the business corporation should have been followed to its full extent, and all the members of the legislative department should have been chosen at large, regardless of ward lines; with, moreover, some provision for minority representation. This result, it is argued, would have been brought about to manifest advantage had the charter provided for the election of a council to be composed of fifteen, or twenty-one, or twenty-four members, as might be thought best, all to be chosen at large, while no voter could vote for over two thirds of the entire number to be chosen; but, on the other hand, each voter should have been at liberty to concentrate all, or any portion of the votes he could cast on one or more candidates, or to distribute them among the full number he was entitled to vote for, giving one vote to each. The fifteen, twenty-one or twenty-four candidates who received in this way the largest number of votes, irrespective of the size of the several votes as compared with the whole or each other, would be elected, and would compose the council.

Had such a system of electing the members of the legislative department been made a part of the Quincy charter, it would, it is contended, have assured an almost absolutely free constituency

Had those composing this total constituency, or any portion of them, desired to secure ward or local representation, it would have been easy for them to organize themselves so as, through concentration of votes, to bring that result about. It was right that they should have this power. If, on the other hand, scattered citizens wished to form a constituency to bring about certain results, or choose to the council particular men, it ought to be made easy for them so to do. It is now difficult, if not impossible. Freedom for individual action was the object to be kept in view and the result to be secured; and this result cannot be attained through the political systems now in use. It could be attained through changes in the basis of constituency of the kind suggested.

As to matters of detail, and the innumerable possible complications which the ingenuity of objectors always suggests, these, it is argued, could safely be left to the constituency and the party managers to work out. If left alone, they would do this as the difficulties arose, and in the easiest and most practical way. A great deal is now heard about trusting the people; but those who most freely make use of this phrase are apt to show the least confidence in the ability of any body of voters to work an experimental system into practical shape by dealing with difficulties as they arise, and not before. It would probably not require the experience of three elections to familiarize both party managers and the great body of voters with the theory and practice both of minority representation and cumulative voting. The more intelligent and independent class of voters understand them already.

The future will decide, probably as the result of slow and painful experience, whether the criticisms and arguments thus advanced are entitled to consideration.

Meanwhile, it is in this connection worthy of notice that the last charter granted, that for the city of Everett, approved June 11, 1892, has provision, in one of the two bodies of which its legislative department is composed, for a certain degree of minority representation. It is there provided that the board of aldermen "shall be composed of six members, who shall be elected by and from the qualified voters of the city," to serve for a term of two years, three aldermen to be elected each year. . . . In the election of aldermen "no voter shall vote for more than two of the candidates for the three positions respectively. If a voter marks more than two names for the three positions to be so filled, his ballot shall not be counted for any of such positions. . . . In every municipal election . . . each voter

may vote for a number of aldermen, one less than the number to be elected, and shall vote for no more; and any ballot which is marked for a greater number of names than as above provided shall not be counted in the vote for aldermen." (Acts 1892, chap. 355, sect. 10.)

It will be observed that in this case, while no provision for cumulative voting is made, the candidates are at large, and a certain, though limited, provision for minority representation is secured. It is a step, although not a long step, in the direction of the larger change of constituency above suggested.

F.

THE following extracts from a very interesting address on the "Government of Cities," and the "Need of a Divorce of Municipal Business from Politics," delivered by Mr. Moorfield Storey, at Buffalo, N. Y., on September 30th, 1891, and printed in the *New England Magazine* for June, 1892 (New Series, vol. vi. pp. 432–441), have a manifest bearing on the text: —

"Every city government is not as bad as that of New York, but everywhere, with rare exceptions, inferior men are elected to municipal office, and any man, however little his education or his previous training may have fitted him for the work, is considered competent to deal with the complicated problems of municipal government. A succession of men more or less incompetent follow each other at brief intervals over the stage, and as a result there is no consistent economical administration of a city's business. Of Boston, a year ago, a gentleman who had been studying the operation of the various departments said, 'The methods are such that no business house could adopt them and keep out of bankruptcy six months.'

. . . . . .

"A third cause of our trouble may perhaps best be illustrated by a comparison. A manufacturing corporation, whose stockholders include Republicans, Democrats, Prohibitionists, and Mugwumps, desires a president. Those who are interested choose some man of acknowledged ability, and without asking what his political opinions are, say to him: 'Become our president, and we will pay you an adequate salary; we will give you the assistance of the best directors that we can select from our own members; you shall have power to manage our business as you think best, subject to their advice, and if you succeed you shall keep the place as long as you like.' The city seeking a mayor says to the same man: 'Do you wish to

become our mayor? You must first agree to pay a large sum to the campaign fund for expenses. You must then satisfy the heads of certain factions that they and their followers have something to gain by your election; and they are practical men, who are not to be satisfied with vague expressions of good will, and will want something very definite. You must then take the chances of a campaign in which all your sins and many which you have never committed will be marshalled against you in the daily papers, and you will be exposed to every kind of misrepresentation. If you are elected, we shall give you very small pay, and a board of directors who will be incompetent to help you, and entirely competent to embarrass and perplex you at every turn. You will receive plenty of criticism from every corrupt politician whose demands you either cannot or will not gratify, but little or no encouragement or support from good citizens, who are too busy with their own affairs or too modest to give you much attention or assistance or even applause, and who treat your good works as a matter of course, while they are swift to visit on you, not only your own sins, but the shortcomings of every city official; and when your term is over, and you are beginning to learn the duties of your office, we will remove you in order to put some other unfortunate victim in your place.' Is it surprising that the private corporation gets its president, and the city is obliged to look elsewhere for its mayor?"